

Cindi Canary and Marta Johnson, Illinois Campaign for Political Reform  
Liane C. Casten, Chicago Media Watch  
Ron Chew, Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community  
Thom Clark, Community Media Workshop  
Jean Darling, Chicago Area Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice  
Michelle Devine, Chicago NOW  
Rose Economou, Columbia College  
Bob Hercules, Media Process Group  
James C. Jones, ChildServ  
Paula Kowalszyk, Street-Level Youth Media  
Joan Levin, Chicago Media Watch  
Sara Livingston, Columbia College  
Cece Lobin  
Ricardo Loza, SEIU, Local One  
Alton Miller, Protestants for the Common Good  
Margie Nicholson, Public Service Media and Marketing  
Michael Niederman, Columbia College  
Christine O'Brien  
Barbara Popovic, Chicago Access Corporation  
Gordon Quinn and Jason McInnes, Kartemquin Films  
Barbara Shaw, Illinois Violence Prevention Authority  
Susie Straus, Chicago NOW  
Studs Terkel  
Blanca Vargas, League of United Latin American Citizens  
Tom Weinberg  
Reverend Janette Wilson, Broadcast Minister's Alliance of Chicago and  
National Rainbow PUSH Coalition  
Reverend Gene Winkler, Greater Chicago Broadcast Ministries

Marlene Baker  
10102 S. Lowe Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60628

Dear Chairperson of the FCC,

I am a broadcast journalism major at Columbia College. This semester I am taking an investigative reporting class. As an assignment for the class, students had to go to a TV news station and ask to see their public files. This assignment was to insure that all the Chicago market TV stations are indeed making their public files available for the public to see.

We had to go out in partners for the assignment: one student as the investigator and the other student, co-investigator to take notes. The station my partner and I was assigned to was WYCC channel 20. The lady in charge of the public files, Cynthia Syperek, was not available to speak with us. Instead, the office manager, Audrey Knighten let us see the files. She told us she had to sit with us while we browse through them to make sure nothing comes up missing.

WYCC is a small station so there wasn't too much to see in their public files. The information in it was current and up to date. It was also very organized. My partner and I were pleased that it was not a problem for us to view the public files.

Sincerely,

Marlene Baker

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marlene Baker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rob Barto  
5421 East River rd.  
Chicago IL 60647

To Whom It May Concern:

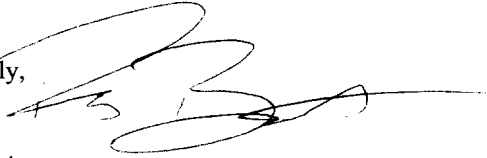
I am a journalism student at Columbia College. Rose Economou's investigative reporting class wrote letters to local television stations and followed up by checking those stations' public files to see whether or not the letters were kept.

My classmates and I went to the WCPX and WGBO studios. We were allowed to see each station's files, were not made to wait more than 10 minutes and were allowed access to copying machines. Our visits were not in the least bit stressful, as some of our other classmates' experiences were.

So this letter is to let you know that these two stations have kept their files current and well organized and that they are "following the rules" with respect to letting the public sort through them.

Sincerely,

Rob Barto

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rob Barto', written over a horizontal line.

December 6, 2000

Federal Communications Commission  
c/o People For Better TV  
Chairman William Kennard  
818 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
NW #505  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Kennard:

I have a complaint about my treatment at Fox Studios in Chicago. I and two friends of mine went there to look at the public files. I understand that they are accessible to the public so I wanted to view them, especially the viewer mail files. Upon our arrival at Fox (11/29/00 1:55pm ) we checked in with security downstairs. We asked to look at the public files and the security guard asked us where we were from and then made a call. She sent us upstairs to the Fox office on the second floor (2:00pm). Once there, we approached a gentleman (he was filling in for the receptionist) at the front desk. I greeted him and told him that we were there to see the public files. He inquired where we were from and why we wanted to view the files. I said that we just wanted to take a look at them. He asked us we were from. He told us to have a seat while he contacted the director of community affairs.

The director, Wanda Wells, greeted us (2:10pm) and wanted to know the nature of our visit. We told her that we just wanted to look at the public files. She persisted to ask what files we wanted and why. She told us that we just can't look at all the files if we don't know what we're looking for. She explained that they have 9 drawers of files and to go through each one would take three to four hours. I told her that we don't want to look at each and every file and that we just wanted to see what a public file consists of. She said that we need to know a specific type of file before we can begin looking.

She then told us what kind of files are in the public files which included viewer mail files. My friends told her that we were interested at taking a look at the viewer mail files. I asked, "So we can't just look at *any* file?" Ms. Wells then asked, "Is this a class project? Well, what's your teacher's name? What class is this for?" We were all caught off guard with that question and didn't know what to say. We all felt very pressured. My friend gave her any teacher's name to satisfy Ms. Wells since that was the only way we were going to be able to view the files. Ms. Wells jotted the name down on her notepad. She told us that we came at a bad time because she had two shows to produce in 45 minutes. She then left (2:20pm) to pull some files that she allowed us to view. We waited for another ten minutes (2:30pm) before she came to get us.

While we waited we discussed among ourselves that if we came at a bad time because she had to produce a show in 45 minutes, does that mean we wouldn't have been able to view the files at all if we came at a later time?

She took us to a location to view the files. She was upset at the fact that, "...we were given incomplete directions by the instructor..." She also said that it was a misleading exercise which by no way is our fault but it reflects poorly on the instructor. She handed us 3 files: a children's programming file, the FCC/Antennae file and the November

viewer mail file. The viewer mail file mainly consisted of E-mail responses. The most recent letter was from November 6, 2000. My letter which was mailed on November 15<sup>th</sup>, was not there. We also noticed a few October letters in the November file.

We pulled out what we wanted photocopied and I asked the gentleman (who happened to be the one we encountered earlier at the front desk) sitting adjacent to us if we or someone could make copies of those originals. He took the originals and said that he'd be right back. Ms. Wells came back with the originals (no copies) and walked us to the front area. Once there, she told us that we can't have copies because their copier was down. This seemed peculiar to us because when we first arrived at the station and were waiting to view the files, we could hear the copier functioning fine.

Ms. Wells said to us, "You have two options, you can come back later today for the copies or you can come back tomorrow." She said that she would leave an envelope with the copies at the front desk for us to pick up. We opted to come back the next day around noon.

My friend and I went back the next day (11/30/00 around 11:40am) and told the receptionist that we were here to pick up copies from the public file. The receptionist rang Ms. Wells and with a sarcastic melodic tone and announced us. She hung up with Ms. Wells and told us to pick up the copies in her office. My friend and I knew that something was about to go down. We were right because when we got to her office, we greeted her and the first thing out of her mouth was, "Who's your teacher, did you speak with her?" Then she told us that we had given her a false teacher's name and that she had her assistant call the college that we all attended. Then I said, "Oh, that's peculiar because my teacher (who I spoke to earlier that morning) told me that a reporter called and said that he had interviewed me and another student that came down to the studio." I couldn't believe that she stooped to such a level as to having someone call my school inquiring about us by identifying himself as a reporter who had just interviewed us.

I told her that her assistant must have told my teacher that he was the reporter that had interviewed us but she denied it several times and said that her assistant didn't say that.. Then we thanked her for the copies and left.

This experience was very disturbing. No one should have to feel that they are out of place or imposing on a station when they want to view the public files. By FCC standards, anyone has the right to view the files without being hasselled. I think this point needs to be driven home to Fox Studios in Chicago.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Campbell". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large, stylized 'S' and 'C'.

Sharon Campbell  
*Concerned Citizen*

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St. SW  
Washington, DC. 20554

To Whom It May Concern,

I recently visited two major television stations in Chicago. I wanted to see the public file out of my curiosity. I was appalled at the treatment I received when I wanted to see the public records.

My first visit was to WPWR channel 50. I had to wait 45 minutes before I was brought a viewing room. Before that, they would not grant me access to the files unless I filled out a form. The form asked for personal information, such as my name and where I live. The form also said to state my purpose, and what I was looking for. The station asked for a valid driver's license in which they copied.

Then, the files were handed to me. I was not allowed to go through them myself. The files consisted purely of viewer letters. There were no FCC reports. They were not current, and no one at the station was able to tell me when they get filed.

My second station was NBC channel 5. They were very polite but kept asking me what I wanted to see. I was led to the file ( which was very organized). I was able to go through everything. I am happy to report they had all FCC reports and children programming. There were some viewer letters but not enough that a big station should have. They also told me that their e mails were kept on a disk but they did not know the location of the disk. I hope you look into this matter.

Thank-you,  
Daniella Djordjevic

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Daniella Djordjevic". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

December 5, 2000

Chairman William Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
818 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW #505  
Washington, DC 20006

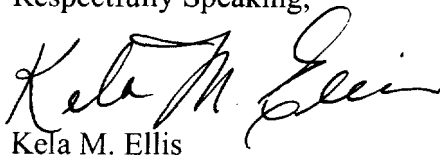
Dear Chairman Kennard:

I, Kela Ellis, have several complaints about WCIU Channel 26 in Chicago. I am an Aunt of a 9-year-old and a 11-year-old. One afternoon while I was babysitting them they turned on this station to watch WWF wrestling. I am aware that this program is for a more mature audience, but if I went by the ratings on most of these shows throughout the day, they would **never** be able to watch television. So I sat through the program with them and to my shocking surprise one of the wrestlers put up his middle finger right into the camera. I'm sure this station has broken many violations by not censoring his finger. I watch many adult television shows and when someone sticks his/her middle finger up, it gets blanked out.

Ironically, one of my college instructors gave the class an assignment to investigate a television stations public files. I was assigned to WCIU Channel 26. When I got to the station I was denied immediate access to their public files. I was told by the receptionist that the person in charge of the public files was gone and wouldn't be back in the office for another 45 minutes, so I had to wait. I guess she assumed that would make me leave, but I kindly waited. When the 45 minutes was up a woman came out of a inside office door and said, "I don't know why you want to look at these boring files." She had me sign my name to a sign in sheet that had three columns of NAME, ADDRESS and PHONE NUMBER. When I got into the office where the public files were they were in chronological order. The last date to be filed was August 2000. When I asked how often they filed their letters sent to the station she said pointing to stacks of paper piled on the file cabinets "Do you see all of this, I don't have enough time to file all of it." Everything in the office looked disorganized. "If you have any questions feel free to ask," she said. I asked her about how did they reply to their letters. She didn't know. I asked her if she knew how often letters where filed, she didn't know. Her demeanor was stand offish and discouraging.

I hope this letter will stop our local and national television stations from continuously airing vulgar corruption to our children early in the afternoon. And I also hope that television stations can be reminded that without the viewer, their station could not exist. So when a citizen walks in and asks to see the public files, they would treat them with the courtesy that they deserve.

Respectfully Speaking,



Kela M. Ellis

12/5/00

Dear Mr. Kennard,

As part of an investigation in a journalism class, I visited the CBS channel 2 news station on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Along with another student, Joe Riley, I searched their public file for letters that had been received recently from viewers, specifically looking for a letter that was written by one of my fellow classmates that was sent out on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

After searching through 3 file cabinets for ten minutes, we finally located the folder, labeled *November*, where we hoped the letter would be. Our letter was not there, and even more surprisingly, the most current letter in the folder was post-marked on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 26 days prior to our visit.

Supervised by Charles Kolmann, Director of Advertising and Promotion, we asked him to make copies of a few letters that we pulled. He obliged, and charged nothing for them.

The friendliness of the three security guards that greeted us as we walked in was very warming and genuine, although Mr. Kolmann seemed a bit nervous, shifty and uncomfortable as we looked at the files, nevertheless, he was very nice and patient as we took our time.

In regards to the missing letter, I wonder if it was a lack of organization, a problem with the mail service, or a complete disregard of FCC regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael F. Fries". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Michael F. Fries



December 12, 2000

Elan Kleis  
1941 N. Dayton  
Chicago, IL 60614

Chairman Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
c/o People for Better TV

Dear Chairman Kennard,

I'm writing to inform you of my recent visits to broadcast stations in the Chicagoland area. Here are summaries of my findings...

WBBM Channel 2

11/30 by Elan Kleis and Joan D. Levin, 10:34am to 12:30pm

We were allowed in with no trouble and a five-minute wait. Angel (not in charge of public files) admitted us. The files were in good order. We did not see Joan's letter, which had been sent about two weeks before the visit. And, it seemed that the station did not hang onto letters that had been emailed, as there were only handwritten letters in the file. There were program reports dating to 1992. Community issues segments decreased exponentially from 1996 to 2000. There were no complaints about children's programming. Children's programming was limited to Saturday mornings. Notes about PSA's were few and far between.

WYIN Channel 56 (PBS) Merrillville, IN

12/1 by Elan Kleis and Mark Mysliwiec, 10:50am to 12:05pm

This ride was roughly an hour from downtown Chicago. We were let in after a short wait by Georgia, the receptionist. We sat in a comfortable room by ourselves and Carmen-the Public Affairs Director-brought the files to us. Georgia and Carmen were extremely pleasant and repeatedly offered coffee. This was the only station that allowed us privacy. At Channel 2 and channel 7 we were given chaperones. She told us there were also copies of everything at the Gary Public Library. These files were the best of the bunch because they were all in order and everything was accounted for. No children's files (not necessary for PBS stations). Programming lists looked great. PSAs were run regularly, including in primetime slots (note the letter of complaint and the response). PSAs were not produced by PBS. The mail was all very positive, except for about 20 letters against the airing of "It's Elementary." A show produced for use in schools and dealing with homosexuality. A number of letters, and the response, were copied. The show was not aired.

WJYS Channel 62 Tinley Park

12/1 by Elan Kleis and Mark Mysliwiec, 12:55 to 1pm

This ride was also an hour from downtown Chicago. We were told by Shawn Hill, the General Manager, that he would not allow us to see the files until Monday. He repeated asked where we were from, who we were, and who we were with. I noted the FCC mandate that says we have to be allowed to view the files. He said to come back Monday. I repeated the mandate. Same response from him. For the third time, I told him the rule. He said, again, come back Monday.

WLS Channel 7

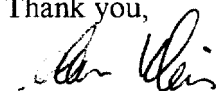
12/5 by Elan Kleis and Ricardo Loza, S.E.I.U. Local One, 9am to 9:45am

We entered without a problem. Charlene showed us to the files. She was pleasant, but when Rick asked her questions, she said we'd have to call someone in the programming department, and made no effort to answer or assist us. There were chairs set up already. Interesting to note: out of five file drawers, one was dedicated to programming, one for political things, and three for letters and email. The children's programming was all run Saturday mornings with roughly five minutes of commercials per half-hour. There were many things missing from their public file: license, applications and related materials, citizen agreements, contour maps, ownership records, list of contracts required to be filed with the FCC, employment records, and copies of the FCC manual. There was some sort of financial information, but it was confusing. Major drop in local programs dealing with community issues in Oct. '97 (30) to June '00 (13).

While we didn't see any complaints about children's programming, there may have been some there, but I got the feeling that the letters just got filed. There was no tabulation of complaints or subjects. And, there were no indications that letters had been read or answered. But, the letters were in order. Most of the complaints were about airing Sunday night football instead of "the Practice." There were also complaints about the anchors and reporters being biased (which I did not see at the other stations.)

I encourage you to establish public interest guidelines for broadcasters as soon as possible.

Thank you,



Elan Kleis

Joan D. Levin  
Apartment 20-D  
1300 North Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, IL 60610

December 6, 2000

Chairman William Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
C/O People for Better TV

Re: WBBM-TV, CBS in Chicago

Dear Chairman Kennard:

On Thursday, November 30 I visited the Public File of WBBM-TV in Chicago. I wanted to learn about the public service programming offered by this station. I noted no public service programming or announcements during the prime time hours of 8-10 p.m. on weeknights. Indeed, according to the station reports, such programming was limited to early morning weekend hours or folded into late evening news.

This confirms my observations during a random check of 8-10 p.m. programming on Monday, November 13, when I observed no public service programming or announcements. (By the way, I could not find my November 16 letter to Mr. Walter DeHaven of WBBM-TV in the public file when I looked for it on November 30.)

Besides what I consider public service programming wholly inadequate in quantity and timing, the matter of viewing the Public File raises another issue. My bus fare for this came to \$3 and involved a fairly long walk as well. Parking would have been prohibitively expensive in this neighborhood. As it was, the whole exercise, portal to portal, used half a day of my time.

Once there, the format of the Quarterly Reports on public interest programming made it difficult to quickly ascertain what community leaders have been involved and what community issues have been covered in these reports.

I would suggest you move to a standardized form for these reports (and perhaps some others), and post them on the internet so that community groups could quickly and inexpensively ascertain how community issues were being handled by this station and other stations.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan D. Levin', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Joan D. Levin

December 2, 2000

William E. Kennard, Chairman of FCC  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> ST. SW  
Washington, D. C. 20554

To Whom It May Concern: Mr. William E. Kennard.

I went to WLS-TV "ABC" Channel 7 in Chicago on November 29, 2000 to see their public file. I was helped by Scharleen Kirk, who was the building assistant. She made it clear from the beginning that she had not helped any one else before with the public file, so she would not be able to answer any questions.

The letters in the public file were in order and legible. However, the files from September through November of this year were not available. Kirk said that the letters from those months were on her desk and that she had not had the time to file them yet. Also, the files from children's programming were not available. She did not know if they had a file for that.

Overall, my experience there was good. But I don't understand why they did not have the files from the last three months when this station is so big and important in the country. Also, I don't understand why she did not have any knowledge on the public file.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Karla Palomo.

concerned viewer

5536 N. Campbell 1-B  
Chicago, IL 60625.

December 4, 2000

Helen Park  
4810 N. Linder Ave  
Chicago, IL. 60630

Federal Communications Commission  
C/O People for Better TV  
818 18<sup>th</sup> street NW #500  
Washington, DC. 20006

Dear Chairman Kennard,

I am a Broadcast Journalism student at Columbia College in Chicago.

Recently my class had a project to visit local Broadcast Television Stations around our town to see the public files.

On November 29<sup>th</sup> 2000, I visited to WSNS Telemundo Television Station to look for a public file. And I also filled out the "Station Visit" form while I was exploring the station. Prior to my visit, one of my classmate wrote a letter to Telemundo regarding their children's programs. Unfortunately, I did not locate her letter from public file.

However, I was surprised to discover that the public files were positive. I could not find any of the negatives comments rather only the positive letters from the viewers. I had a chance to look at the files from 1999 up to September 2000. My classmates send it out the letter to the station on November 15, 2000. I am very curious why the letter that my classmate sent was not in the file. But most of all, it was a very good experience for me as a student to explore these kind of thing and had an opportunity to do so.

Thank you for taking time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Park", with a stylized flourish at the end.

December 6, 2000

Dear Chairman Kennard:

On November 29th, 2000, I made a visit to WSNS Telamundo television stations to view the public files. To my surprise the station was very unorganized due to an expansion of the existing facility. I found it very interesting when I saw the files there were no letters of complaints. All the letters I was shown by the program director contained only favorable comments.

Two weeks before my visit a letter of complaint was written to WSNS by one of my fellow students. That letter was nowhere to be found in the files I was shown. With this in mind I have become very concerned about what happens to letters with unfavorable comments. Aren't the letters with unfavorable comments about the station also considered a part of the public file?

I look forward to hearing your opinion on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nicole Reddick".

Nicole Reddick

4139 S. Albany Av.  
Chicago, IL 60632

December 6, 2000

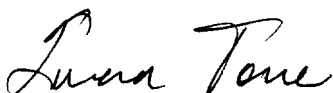
William Kennard, Federal Communications Commission

Dear Chairperson,

On November 30, 2000 I visited WYCC channel 20 in Chicago to view their public files. After waiting for about 20 minutes the administrative assistant, Audrey Mcknight, told us that Cynthia Syperek, director of programming and operations was leaving for the day (at 4PM), and that it was her who would show us the files, but that she could not answer any questions on them, since that was Miss Syperek's job. She advised us to make an appointment if we decided to come again. The files were mostly from 1997 and there were only eight viewer letters dating back to 1993. Seven of the letters were positive and one was negative. They were somewhat helpful and not rude, just indifferent.

I hope that my experience encourages the FCC to monitor Chicago TV stations, so that they provide better service to the public wanting to see their files. A friend had sent a letter to WYCC two weeks before our visit complementing some of their programs and I was glad to see it was on file, Thanks for your time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susana Torres".

Susana Torres

December 6, 2000

Chairperson William Kennard, Federal Communications Commission

Dear Chairperson,

In a recent visit to WFLD channel FOX 32 in Chicago, two of my classmates and I had a very disappointing experience. Two weeks before our visit we had mailed a letter to the Fox affiliate in Chicago and then decided to visit the station to view their public files. Upon our arrival on the afternoon of November 30, 2000 we were greeted by Wanda Wells, the station's director of community affairs. After waiting for Miss Wells for about ten minutes, she came to us in a somewhat friendly manner, but that only lasted about two seconds. She accosted us with never ending questions on why we needed to see the files. We finally told her it was for a class project and her questions continued: "From what school? What class? Who's your professor?" All this while she wrote it all down. We were under the impression that as members of the public the public files would be open for us with out question.

We were not sure exactly what we wanted to see and she told us we could not see them all to pick, so instead she only brought a few files including viewer mail. The letters from viewers were from January 2000, so we requested the most recent, their file only went up to November 6, 2000 and the letter we had sent was not in file yet. Before we went in she had warned us that she would only be there for 45 minutes because she had other work to do. We spent about 15 minutes going over the files and then asked for some copies.

She walked us to the door and once there informed us that the copy machine was not working, and that she could either mail us the copies or we could come back another day. We were surprised that we had to take another trip to the station, I'm sure they had another copier in another floor. Her attitude towards us was one of annoyance, demanding, condescending, authoritarian, and intimidating.

My professor later informed me that someone from the Fox station had called her. The next day we arrived to pick up the copies with the receptionist as she had instructed us, but instead we were announced and the directed to her office. The first words out of her mouth were: "Who's your teacher again? What did she say? You gave me the wrong name?" She said her assistant had called my school and I asked why but she did not answer. I didn't think it was any of their business who my teacher was and feeling pressured to answer I just threw a name at her, but upon calling the college they figured out who she was looking for. We were given the copies and dispatched quickly and without any pleasantries or apologies for having to come back for the copies.

I ask that you review WFLD and advise them to improve their community relations and to respond to our interest in a much more effective manner. They seem to be following FCC rules very reluctantly. Thanks for your attention.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susana Torres". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Susana Torres



1521 W. Wolfram Ave  
Chicago, IL. 60657

December 6, 2000

William E. Kennard, Chairman of FCC  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St. SW  
Washington DC 20554

Dear Mr. Kennard;

On December 1<sup>st</sup> I visited two television stations asking them if I could view their public file, as part of a class project. Considering I am well within my rights when asking to view the public file, I was frustrated with how I was treated.

The first station I went to was WMAQ (channel 5) in Chicago. I was taken care of rather quickly, but I had to deal with four different people. Everyone from the General Manager to his secretary talked to us before we could actually view the file. They finally allowed us to view it and I was shocked to find that they had only 1-2 letters per month written to the station. No letters complaining about content or anything were included. The station also failed to have in the file a letter written by a classmate of mine which had been mailed to them two weeks earlier. While I was treated very kindly by the people over at WMAQ, I question where they are putting all their letters they receive, because their public file is limited to public relations letters.

Later that day I visited WPWR-TV (channel 50). They were not organized at all. I had to wait 45 minutes in the lobby before anyone came to talk to me about viewing the file. I then had to fill out a form and also give them a copy of my drivers-license before I could view the file. Upon viewing the file I was interested to find that they had at least 20 letters from the public filed for every month. They to didn't have a letter that had been mailed to them two weeks ago, which was written by a classmate. Not only that, they didn't even have a November file.

I think that there is a problem over at WMAQ and WPWR. Obviously a large station, such as NBC, would have more than one letter a month sent to them regarding

their programming. I also understand that it is a law that every letter sent to these television stations by the public has to be placed in the public file within 24-hours of receiving it. It is quite obvious that this is not being done. Perhaps your Commission should look into if other stations around the country are following these rules. After all, they are receiving money from the government to serve the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Trubow', with a stylized, cursive script.

Alan Trubow

P.S. NBC told us that they had an abundance of snails from the public about their programming, however, we were unable to view them because they were kept on computer disk. The lady helping us said ~~that~~ she didn't know where the disk was.

December 6, 2000

William E. Kennard, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
C/o People for Better TV  
818 18th Street NW #505  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Kennard,

A television station in Chicago may be concealing viewer feedback on its children's programming, and is not updating its public file.

I recently paid a visit to CBS affiliate WBBM-TV Chicago. The purpose of my call was to inspect the public file on behalf of Operation T.I.P.I. (Television Investigation of the Public Interest), a project of Columbia College Chicago in cooperation with People for Better TV.

We were greeted in a friendly manner when my associate, Michael, and I arrived to the station at 12:56 p.m. Wednesday, November 29th. After stating our business, we watched as the security guard went down the list of public file liaisons. The last person she called was Charles Kolmann, Director of Advertising and Promotion. We waited in the lobby for about twenty minutes until Mr. Kolmann accompanied us to the file room.

Undoubtedly, we were given appropriate access to the public file, and in a timely manner. The public file room was conveniently located off the lobby. However, my associate and I share some concerns.

Upon our entry to the public file room, which needed to be opened with a key, I noticed the file drawers were not labeled. Therefore, it was difficult to know what order the documents were in. Aside from this, the files were organized, but incomplete.

Letters from the public contained at the latest, those postmarked the fourth of November. Two weeks prior to our visit, we sent a letter to the station. The letter made mention of children's programming at the station. During our inspection, it was not found among the files. Nor did we find **any** letters regarding children's programming in the nine months of file we examined.

WBBM-TV is compliant with the FCC's requirement of core programming, C.F.R. Section 73.673. According to FORM 398, quarter ending 9/30/2000, the station provides three hours per week of core programming early Saturday mornings. Though the requirement is met for quantity, the quality of the programs appears to be lacking. Set in the year 2222, *Blaster's Universe* "centers on the exploits of a Midwestern boy and his best friend, an alien girl, who fight crime and save the universe using only logic and problem-solving strategies." Putting spin on the plot description of a silly cartoon-- is apparently all that is needed to satisfy the FCC's requirement for children's programming.

Although there were no letters regarding children's programming, the public file was amid with feedback to the CBS show featuring Dr. Laura Schlessinger. The letters criticized attacks on homosexuals made by the talk show host. The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution protects television shows with such content. Hence, no such letters threaten a television station's ability to serve public interest. On the other hand, letters complaining about children's television programming would. Three-quarters of all viewer letters in the public file were about Dr. Schlessinger and CBS 2 Chicago News.

The comments on the news were mainly about, or revolving around Carol Marin and the 10'oclock news team. There were no e-mail messages in the public file.

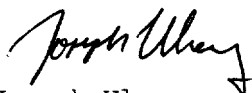
As I am discussing the topic of viewer letters, I should mention that one of them included information on the quality of Channel 2's signal. An attorney in Elgin says he began receiving interference to the signal upon the installation of new antennas on the Sears Tower. Having an omni-directional signal of only 35kW, WBBM-TV is prone to interference. Unfortunately, the installation of other station's DTV antennas inhibits their ability to serve the public.

Mr. Kolmann was very co-operative with us during our visit, and helped us pass the time with a friendly banter. Despite this, the body language he demonstrated was indicative of a nervous disposition. After Michael and I completed our inspection, we requested copies of several documents, including three viewer letters. Mr. Kolmann left us to the lobby, and returned about ten minutes later. Surprisingly, he returned from outside the building, through the front doors catching his breath. Thanking Mr. Kolmann for the photocopies, patience and assistance, we concluded our visit.

After my associate and I departed the facilities of WBBM-TV, we discovered that one of the letters we requested was not given to us. Michael remembers the letter being of a dissatisfied viewer who had happened to have children.

At WBBM-TV Chicago, we were given appropriate access to the public file without question. We were granted all the time we required for our inspection and dealt with in a courteous, professional manner. However, my inspection revealed the incomplete nature of their public file. More importantly, it discovered the potential failure of WBBM-TV to serve public interest by disregarding viewer input on children's programming.

Sincerely,



Joseph Ulrey  
308 East 14th Avenue  
Naperville, IL 60563-2723



December 12,2000

Dorothy Garrick  
People for Better TV  
P.O. Box 212101  
Columbia, South Carolina 29221-2101

Chairman Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, D.C 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

We are deeply concerned about the television broadcasters in our community receiving free public airwaves without a clear understanding of what we can expect in return.

We are concerned about the lack of local programming addressing the needs of our community, the amount of sex and violence on television, the number of commercials during children's programming, the lack of programming accessible to the disabled, the cost to consumers of receiving digital signals, lack of educational programs services, lack of minorities in key jobs, limited amount of community outreach and especially problems we are having when trying to monitor the public files.

On Tuesday, December 12, 2000 at 10:44 A.M. I visited one of my local broadcasting television station WOLO-TV 25, ABC Affiliate, 5807 Shakespeare Road, Columbia, South Carolina. (On August 15, 2000 Roland Jackson and Dorothy Garrick monitored the public file at this station).

Mr. Dave Aiken, Programming Staff escorted me to the area where the public file is kept. The file is located up several stairs, not handicap accessible. The file is located near an office in a small file cabinet. The lights were very dim; therefore it was hard to read the documents. The documents were available in English only and no other alternative formats (i.e. large print).

I understand that the availability of the file is very important given that the FCC rely on the involvement and scrutiny by members of the public to monitor broadcast licensee performance. In order for the public to monitor the files, it is important that broadcasters understand that it is virtually

impossible for members of the public who works during “normal working” hours monitor the files.

It is unfair to the public for the television broadcasters to only set “normal hours”, for the public to visit the stations and monitor the public file. In order for the broadcasters and our community to have better dialogue the broadcasters must provide the public with greater flexibility to monitor the files.

Again, we urge you to make sure television broadcasters have a clear understanding of what the public expects and demand in return for giving them free airwaves.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dorothy Gauch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely".

